

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan announced today that the City of Bradenton has been awarded \$330,000 in federal funds to help fight violent crime. The U.S. Department of Justice's Edward Byrne Memorial Discretionary Grants Program funds will be used to target violent crimes within Manatee County and enhance officer safety.

"Unfortunately, violent crime in Bradenton has risen in the past year," said Buchanan. "I witnessed the impact to the community and the family members when I visited the mother of nine-year-old Stacy Williams who was shot to death during a gang related drive-by shooting. While random acts of violence such as this are hard to predict or even prevent, I believe that greater intelligence gathering, agency collaboration, and proper equipment are keys to making situations like this less likely to occur in a community."

"I applaud the city for proactively targeting violent crime and I am pleased to help support their efforts," added Buchanan. "This grant will allow them to purchase equipment that will safeguard the community as well as the officers who put their lives on the line to help ensure the safety of city residents."

The city will use the funds to purchase a rescue vehicle and safety equipment for the Bradenton Police Department's "Rolling Thunder" program through which the department is partnering with federal, state, county, and other local law enforcement agencies to reduce violent crime.

Chief Michael Radzilowski said, "We're certainly doing the best we can to search out state and federal grants to save our taxpayers money. Police equipment is very expensive, and this is the best way to get it without burdening the taxpayer."